

BARRE GAZETTE

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Quabbin audit gets ‘clean’ opinion

By Ellenor Downer
Staff Writer

BARRE – The Quabbin Regional School District Committee heard the annual audit review from Powers & Sullivan at its last Thursday night Zoom meeting.

Craig Peacock, partner in Powers & Sullivan, said, “COVID-19 complicated audits this year for all our clients.” Although using the same audit firm, the Quabbin district worked with a new team this year. Partner Richard Sullivan, who along with his team, did the audit for years, retired.

Peacock said his team reviewed the activity accounts at the middle and high school. He said, “He was happy with the control of the funds, but had some recommendations.” He found no irregularities at all. He recommended enhancing accounting practices by adding checking accounts and expenditures be part of the warrant system. Currently, the activity funds had savings accounts and were handled at the principal level.

He said this type of accounts had a high fraud rate of 80%. He said all dollars in the Quabbin activity accounts looked at were proper or expended correctly with no unallowable costs. He said he could find no documentation of school committee approval for a trip to Washington D.C., which got cancelled. School committee member Richard Allan questioned the lack of approval of the trip as the committee approved all school trips.

Since the Quabbin district received over \$750,000 in federal funds, his team found all requested documents required and had no finding. The district received \$711,000 for special education as well as federal meals and CARES Act funds. He said the district had an unmodified opinion and handling the funds were in compliance with all federal requirements.

Powers & Sullivan conducted the audit mostly remotely about 90%. The firm had a secure portal, which the district’s finance team scanned and uploaded all documentation to the portal. Peacock said he was impressed with detail of finance team conducted in real team. The school team supplied all answers to questions in timely fashion. He gave the district an unmodified opinion – a clean opinion, which is the best one can get.

He said Other Post Employment Benefits was a liability. The district has been putting money aside to fund this. He said other districts were not doing this. Currently, OPEB is not a mandate, but could be at some point. He recommended the school district add some extra funds to OPEB. Peacock said he would not give a report like this unless it was warranted. The school committee voted to accept the FY 20 audit review.

Student advisory council

Eighth grader Matthew Ericson reported to the committee about how the school year was going. He said overall it was going well; he went to school two times per week and the other days remotely. He said the students were following all the rules, which was good and he

See QRSD, page 5

Red sky in the morning sailers take warning



Turley Publication Courtesy Photo by Barbara Kempksi

Monday, Dec. 14 began with a beautiful sunrise. The red color is an indication there is a high water content in the atmosphere. It snowed most of the day, but it did not accumulate.

Hardwick marijuana micro-business proposed

Single tax rate

By Paula Ouimette
Staff writer

HARDWICK – Ralph Rogers, a lifelong resident of Barre and president/CEO of Rockwerx Inc., an indoor climbing gym, introduced himself to selectmen Tuesday to discuss a community host agreement for his proposed marijuana micro-business, Adroit Manufacturing.

Rogers has secured use of the large, red building at 435 Lower Rd., to house his business that will manufacture marijuana products for wholesale. The building is currently open for limited business dealing with antiques.

Harry Comerford, Planning Board chairman, told selectmen he has met with Rogers informally, and advised Rogers to be transparent with his abutters, which he has done. Rogers has spoken to the owner of the Hardwick Farmers Co-op, which is located across the street from his proposed business, and has also sent letters to other abutters. The property at 435 Lower Rd., is commercially zoned.

Rogers emphasized his proposed business would have little to no impact on the town of Hardwick, in the way of odors or traffic issues. He does not intend to cultivate marijuana at his location, nor would he have



Turley Publications staff photo by Paula Ouimette

Barre businessman Ralph Rogers has proposed a marijuana micro-business at 435 Lower Road. He would make marijuana products and sell them wholesale to retailers. There would be no cultivation or retail sales.

a retail shop. He would be selling his products wholesale to other retailers. This would limit the amount of traffic in and out of the space to employees only. Rogers said the building on the property is 5,000 square feet and even if Hardwick allowed for cultivation, his ability would be quite small. He also stated that there would not be any signage on the building advertising marijuana products. The property is also 725 feet from the school’s property line, over the 500 feet that is required.

Rogers, who is an alternate on the Barre Planning Board and was a member of their Marijuana

Bylaw Review Committee, spent four months with that committee to re-write Barre’s licensing bylaws for the Board of Selectmen. He said Barre currently has three community host agreements. Rogers said the Cannabis Control Commission will not authorize a license without a community host agreement in place. He sent the board almost the same exact community host agreement that was accepted in Barre. In his agreement, he is proposing a 3% community impact tax to Hardwick, the maximum allowed by the CCC.

Selectman Chairman Kenan

Young said the board would run it by town counsel to make sure they go in the right direction. Julie Quink said Rogers needs a public information session with the town to get his CCC license. Comerford said COVID-19 has complicated that process, as an information session would have to be virtual or in a very large space for social distancing.

Town Administrator Theresa Cofske said the impact fee must be reasonable and would be based on the town’s perception of the impact. As Rogers’ proposed

See HARDWICK, page 6

Barre selectmen review tent quotes

By Ellenor Downer
Staff Writer

BARRE – Selectmen received quotes for tents to be purchased with CARES Act funds.

Town administrator Jessica Sizer said three companies offered proposals. Quotes were \$22,000 from Selena, \$29,864 from American Tent and \$43,000 from e-canopy. However, all three quotes were not the same. The American Tent and e-canopy quotes used two inch framing for 20’ x 30’ frame tents and Selena had a smaller diameter frame.

Selectmen chair Gregory O’Sullivan said he would rather pay a little more for the heavier frame. He said he asked the building inspector about the style of tent and he recommended the frame style tent. The tents have sides, but when in use one or more sides would be open. The tents would be used for outside meetings and after the pandemic for other outside activities. He said four people could set up the tent in about 15 minutes. He said the board had one more meeting before the CARES Act spending deadline of Dec. 30. He asked the town administrator to get the other company to fit the bill for two-inch pole frame. Selectmen planned to purchase four to seven tents. He asked the other selectmen to visit the company web sites before the next meeting.

Selectman Sullivan said he wanted the tents stored in a building rather than a trailer. He said they could be stored in various town buildings like the library, senior center, public safety building and basement of the town hall.

Selectman vice-chair Matthew Urban said the town hall basement might not be the easiest to

get in and out. O’Sullivan said the basement had direct access on Mechanics Street had had lots of room to store the tents.

COVID-19 update

The town administrator said there was a big increase in COVID cases in communities and field hospitals opened again. The public health nurse said Barre had eight cases. The town administrator said eight people testing positive with over 5,000 residents was not a “panic” number to have. She said the increase was due to people gathering indoors now rather than outdoors due to the cold weather.

Selectman Urban said Barre went for many months without a spike in cases and urged people to keep taking precautions. He said a civic leader in Worcester recently came down with COVID.

Ambulance

Selectman O’Sullivan said the second ambulance was used all the time and he hoped the town could get another year of service from it. The one the town replaced was “garbage.” The new ambulance was on order and was all wheel drive. He said host money from marijuana when the town gets the money, it could be used to replace some of the town rescue vehicles.

Selectmen meeting room

Selectman O’Sullivan said about only three or four boards and committees used the selectmen’s meeting room. The meeting room has recording equipment so meetings held there get recorded for cable and YouTube access. Meetings not held there did not get recorded. He said the meeting room had air purification and ionization filters installed. He said he would like to see the other two selectmen attend in the board

See BARRE, page 6

DOR approves Barre’s FY 21 tax rate

BARRE — The town of Barre Assessor’s Office announces the Fiscal 2021 tax rate has been approved by the Department of Revenue. The tax rate has been approved at \$18.00 per \$1,000 valuation, which is an increase of 13 cents from the Fiscal 2020 tax rate.

Based upon recent valid sales within the town of Barre the Fiscal 2020 average single family home valuation of \$219,304 has increased by approximately \$6,783 to the recently approved Fiscal 2021 average single family home valuation of approximately \$226,087 with the expected increase in valuations along with town spending at town meeting the average single family home owner could see an actual tax increase of approximately \$150.61 for Fiscal 2021.

The third and fourth quarter tax bills will be prepared within the next few weeks and should be

See TAX RATE page 8



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News of the Towns

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Note: Many meetings are closed to the public or will be held remotely.

BARRE

Sewer Commission – Dec. 17 at 7 p.m.
Board of Selectmen – Dec. 21 at 6:30 p.m.
Conservation Committee – Dec. 22 at 7 p.m.
Historical Commission – Jan. 4 at 7 p.m.
Felton Field Commission – Jan. 5 at 6:30 p.m.
Council on Aging – Jan. 6 at 1 p.m.
Barre Housing Authority – Jan. 7 at 3 p.m.
Board of Health – Jan. 11 at 5 p.m.
Water Commission – Jan. 11 at 6:30 p.m.
DPW Commission – Jan. 11 at 6:30 p.m.
Library Trustees – Jan. 13 at 7 p.m.
Cable Advisory Committee – Feb. 9 at 7 p.m.

HARDWICK

Personnel Committee – Dec. 21 at 5:30 p.m.
Board of Selectmen – Dec. 21 at 6:30 p.m.
Planning Board – Dec. 22 at 6:30 p.m.
Recycling Commission – Jan. 5 at 6:30 p.m.
Board of Health – Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m.
Paige Library Trustees – Jan. 7 at 7 p.m.
Gilbertville Public Library – Jan. 8 at 4 p.m.
Gilbertville-Wheelwright Sewer Commissioners – Jan. 11 at 6 p.m.
Council on Aging – Jan. 14 at 9:30 a.m.

HUBBARDSTON

Planning Board – Dec. 17 at 6:30 p.m.
Capital Improvement Planning Committee – Dec. 22 at 7:30 p.m.
Open Space Committee – Dec. 29 and Jan. 26 at 7 p.m.
Historic Commission – Jan. 2 at 10 a.m.
Board of Selectmen – Jan. 4 and Jan. 11 at 6:30 p.m.
Board of Selectmen – Jan. 4 at 6:30 p.m.
Conservation Commission – Jan. 5 at 7 p.m.
Planning Board – Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m.

PETERSHAM

Board of Health – Dec. 17 and Jan. 7 at 7 p.m.
Planning Board – Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.
Nichewaug Inn and Academy Committee 2020 – Dec. 28 at 6:30 p.m.
Open Space and Recreation Committee – Jan. 5 at 6:30 p.m.
Conservation Commission – Jan. 5 at 7:30 p.m.
Council on Aging – Jan. 11 at 10 a.m.
Cemetery Commission – Jan. 14 at 7 p.m.

RUTLAND

Planning Board Public Hearing – Dec. 22 at 6:50 p.m.
Public Hearing – Jan. 11 at 6 p.m.

Three farmers receive MFBAPF John and Liolia Schipper Grants

MARLBOROUGH – Following a competitive selection process, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Agricultural Preservation Foundation selected three farmers from 28 applications to receive grants from the John and Liolia Schipper Grant program. These grants are focused on assisting Massachusetts farmers in becoming more economically viable and sustainable.

“We saw a strong interest in this grant program again this year,” said Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation President Mark Amato. “This was made possible by a generous bequest from the late John and Liolia Schipper and is meant to assist deserving farmers develop their businesses. I look forward to seeing this year’s three farms complete their projects.”

Grant recipients include the following:

Denise Barstow, who oversees a dairy farm based in Hampshire County. She will purchase equipment to upgrade their robotic milker.

Chris Parsons, who oversees a diversified livestock farm based in Hampshire County. He will purchase new grain bins to improve his herd’s nutrition.

Henry Sarafin, who oversees a diversified timber operation based in Hampshire County. He will be purchasing safety equipment to improve his operation, which will also improve productivity.

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Mon., Dec. 21 thru Wed., Dec. 23 9:30am-7pm
Thurs., Dec. 24 9:30am-3pm
Closed Christmas Day thru Fri., Dec. 27

Celebrating 84 years in Gardner

Beverly Duda continues senior yoga classes online

By Paula Ouimette
Staff writer

BARRE – Local senior citizens have long enjoyed the benefits of the yoga classes under the guidance of Beverly Duda, RYT, through the Listening Wellness Center, at 35 South St. With the closure of senior centers across the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these seniors had lost a vital component to maintaining wellbeing. Knowing how important these classes were to her students, Duda worked with Listening Wellness Center’s Executive Director Laura Dusha Nelson to connect with seniors via Zoom.

Duda, a resident of West Brookfield, has been offering the Senior Yoga Program in Barre for over 15 years. She has offered classes at various locations in town, including Grandview Terrace, Listening Wellness Center’s Yoga Studio and the Barre Senior Center. Dusha Nelson said, “We have been talking a long time about online classes. Bev and I met and did some short videos which are on our website so folks could get back into things and then we did a one-time offering at the beginning of November that was so well received that she decided to ‘jump in’ to her old schedule.”

Being a new format of communication for most people, Zoom (and other virtual meeting places), has been a blessing and also a source of frustration for those with technological challenges. Many seniors had to quickly adapt to using smart phones, tablets or computers as a primary means of social interaction.

“Laura (Dusha Nelson) has also helped get folks set up for our zoom classes with their devices either by appointment or by phone,” Duda said. “So the support is there for any of us who would like to try our



Turley Publications Courtesy Photo

Beverly Duda will continue to provide senior yoga classes online.

Senior Yoga Zoom classes, no excuses, just need to sign up, the rest will fall into place.”

Prior to offering the Zoom classes, Duda and Dusha Nelson worked together to record short videos of yoga poses for seniors to practice from their homes. She said, “The videos were fun and a way to get over being camera shy.” These videos can be viewed on the Listening Wellness Center’s Facebook page. Many of Duda’s students, and yoga newcomers, have used these videos to build on their yoga techniques.

Duda has been able to keep the Zoom classes as close to “normal” as possible. “Our class together it is very much like if we were in person,” she said. “I make sure they can see me and I still get to see my students and help address their needs. We still have fun, I can joke with them, they can still ask questions, we can still communicate throughout class. Also they are in the comfort of their home so I will offer the use of chair, walls, countertop, etc. as support in their practice. The students are also very happy to see each other and get to have a little social chat before or after class to keep our sense of community.”

Yoga can be enjoyable and beneficial to people of all ages on many levels, not just physical. Duda said, “In my classes you will meet some wonderful people in the communities that we share,” she said. “Together we also enjoy and practice asana (yoga postures) meditation, and pranayama (breathing techniques) practices and their favorite Yoga Nidra (20 to 30-minute guided conscious rest). I choose to make my classes friendly, joyful and curiously playful. I would like to inspire folks to learn and enjoy the miracle of their bodies. We look and feel for the support our anatomy offers us. I use a lot of metaphors and analogies in class to help relate to different ways of thinking and noticing ourselves, our own paths. I also make my classes very practical to take what may be learned out into everyday life to conserve energy and move more efficiently. As we are all aging we address many of the ways we age and age differently, recover differently from injury or illness. So we start from where we are at and build from there. We grow and support each other through our practice together in and out of class.”

During the month of December, Listening is hosting Duda’s classes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at both 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. live on Zoom. December classes are \$5 for seniors and Listening is working toward the Yoga Club (unlimited classes) for Embodiyoga which is \$80 a month. For more information about joining these yoga classes, people may email Listeningwellnesscenter@gmail.com.

For more information about the Listening Wellness Center, people may visit their website at listeningwellness.org, email listeningwellnesscenter@gmail.com or find them on Facebook.

Oakham

Ellenor Downer

edowner@turley.com



Church to hold candle light services

The Oakham Congregational Church will hold its annual Christmas Eve candle light service Thursday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. People should wear masks and follow social distancing.

Church services

Sunday, Dec. 20 the Oakham Congregational Church will hold its 10 a.m. worship service in the church sanctuary. Sunday School is held downstairs in Fellowship Hall. People should wear a mask and practice social distancing in the sanctuary.

Barre Dining Center

BARRE — Elder Services of Worcester Area Nutrition Program welcomes guests to dine at the Barre Senior Center, 557 South Barre Road. The following meals will be served for the week of Dec. 21.

Meal sites are closed and there are only Meals on Wheels deliveries.

Volunteers are needed at the Barre dining site. Volunteers are needed for Meals on Wheels (mileage reimbursement) and in the kitchen. People should contact 978-355-5027.

MON. – Shepherd’s pie, carrots, peas, mixed fruit, marble rye bread

TUES. – Chicken cordon bleu, cranberry stuffing, roasted broccoli and carrots, cream puff, Italian bread

WED. – Beef with onions and peppers, potato wedges, summer corn, strawberries, sandwich roll

THURS. – Baked potato with chili and cheese, broccoli, sour cream, vanilla mousse, pumpernickel bread

FRI. – Holiday

No meal served

*Diabetic friendly dessert

**Higher sodium entree

Meal includes milk and margarine. Menus are subject to change. All meals are served at about 11:45 a.m. each weekday. Reservations should be made the day before by calling 978-355-5027 before 10:30 a.m. The donation of \$2.50 per meal helps keep the program running.

Woods Memorial Library service hours expanded

BARRE – Thanks to CAREs Act funding, Woods Memorial Library has expanded their material pickup appointment and return service hours until the end of 2020.

The service hours are Tuesdays from 2:30-7:30 p.m.; Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Fridays from 2:30-4:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Hours may change depending upon staff availability.

Postponements and cancellations due to the coronavirus pandemic

Due to the social distancing requirements with the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Christmas in New Braintree Craft Fair will not be held in December 2020. Next year’s fair will take place Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021.

Given the current surge in COVID cases in the state, and with an abundance of caution for the health and safety of the cast and crew, Theatre at the Mount’s live stream production of Winter Wonderettes is cancelled.

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Opinion

Letters to the Editor

Elementary school thanks local businesses

On behalf of the Hardwick Elementary School, we would like to thank some of our local stores that donated money to help families in need this holiday season. Hannafords, The Big Y and Walmart donated hundreds of dollars to go to our holiday baskets. Thanks to the generosity of these stores, we were able to put together almost twenty baskets of Thanksgiving dinners to make sure our families in need could have a proper celebration.

With another holiday coming up, we are now able to put together another twenty dinner baskets for these families once more. The support that Walmart, The Big Y and Hannafords have shown to our community during these hard times will go a tremendous way in making sure that no Hardwick family is without a holiday dinner.

Hardwick Elementary School staff

Thank you from the Women’s Fellowship

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported this year’s wreath sale including all the businesses in Barre. If it were not for your support our Wreath Sale would not have been such a success. We hope that it brought everyone a little cheer in this very trying Holiday season, those of you who bought wreaths, the women who telephoned and sold wreaths, the wreath decorators and deliverers.

I give my heartfelt thank you to the following for their help and support Marsha Bray, Ann Clark, Mark Cooley, Sarah Dyer, Sandy & John Fritscher, Lisa and Ward Holloway, Crystal & Madeline Isgro, Sam Isgro, Margaret Marshall, Deb Page, Beth Richard, and Jean Walsh

Thank you,
Wendy Isgro
Barre Congregational Church Women’s Fellowship

Guest column

Adventures of Gertrude the Cat

By Ruth Robinson

Dear Folks,

My head is just a whirling with all the activity around this house. I guess it is that season again when they bring a tree into the house and set it up by the front window. It stands in a bucket of water and I remember I get extra drinks from that. I have to be careful though not to get some needles when I do that as those are sharp and don’t taste good.

I will keep out of the way on the back of the couch while Missy decorates the tree. At night, there are silver things that sparkle and make the tree look pretty.

Missy is so happy with everything now. She was just a little unhappy when she went to get more decorations in a special closet as there seeds scattered among everything. Apparently a mouse or mice were in that place and taking seeds from Missy’s bird bucket in the kitchen. Unfortunately, I had followed her to that place and promptly got a scolding for not catching the little critters. I told her in cat language that I never hunted mice in that place so I really wasn’t responsible.

Of course, she never heard a word of what I said, so I just hung my head and scurried back into the other room. Whew, maybe it is time to try out the new drinking bucket.

O what do I see? Missy must have dropped an ornament and it has rolled under the TV table. I tried to fish it back out, but it doesn’t roll very well and Missy is preparing for “no power or lights out,” whatever that means.

Maybe I will find out. Yep, it happened. I can see in the dark, but Missy has to carry some kind of thing that makes a light so she can see. This darkness will be good mouse hunting for me I think. Wish me luck.

Stay healthy folks.
Love,
Gertrude

CARNIVAL DREAM

I was a dreamer then
in days gone by.
When painted airships filled my sky.

Rides were a nickel
Cokes were a dime.
In your youth, you’re suspended in time.

I was a dreamer then
with my candy cone.
Even in laughter often alone.

Erecting a world
of love and lace.
Of pain and guilt, there wasn’t a trace.

I’m a dreamer still
as the days race by.
Despite the fact that they too shall cry.

There may be those
with a way and a scheme.
But, there’ll always be a Carnival Dream.

– Patricia Masten



In Past Pages

5 years ago (Dec. 17, 2015)

Joshua Hubbard of Barre was named to the UMass Dartmouth Chancellor’s List in recognition of earning a spring semester grade point average of 3.8 or higher of a possible 4.0.

The North Brookfield Youth Center in North Brookfield will receive \$10,000 from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, which is giving out more than \$710,000 to a wide range of non-profits as part of its fall discretionary grants program.

With the oversight of the Cemetery Commission, preservation work has begun on the historic Hearse House in Petersham Center Cemetery. The 1888 fieldstone building is receiving the attention of the Cemetery Commission working with Oxford based mason Chase Davis of CD Masonry. Renovation work is being funded completely by private donations contributed to a town fund combined with a grant from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. The Cemetery Commission has long had its eye on preserving the structure and worked to gather private donations and grant funding to make it happen in 2015.

10 years ago (Dec. 23, 2010)

In an effort to make a beautiful holiday gift to those that have given so much for us, the Petersham Lions Club collected bags of groceries for the Montachusett Veteran’s Outreach Center, located in Gardner, which serves veterans from all over the north-central Massachusetts area. The project was spearheaded by Lions Jim Regan, John Magnino and George McGrath, who distributed brown grocery bags to fellow Lion members and asked that they be filled and turned in at the town hall. The trio was thrilled with the response. More than 45 Lions and other Petersham residents showed up with gift bags for veterans.

The Christmas Spirit was certainly in the air at Barre Savings Bank when many local children and their families stopped by the Enchanted Workshop for a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Each child took home a cuddly stuffed polar bear donated by Barre Savings Bank. Country Gourmet donated cocoa and the Barre Woman’s Club donated cookies. Barre Savings Bank sponsors the annual holiday event and extends thanks to all who visited.

Stan White, president of the East Quabbin Land Trust

LOOK BACK
Oakham Center School - 1991



Oakham Center School teacher Kyle Carey (standing, middle) and Worcester Polytechnic Institute Chemistry Professor James Dittami (standing, right) use a 1-amp power supply to explain simple circuits to students in the new Science Connection program at the school. This new program, the result of a \$25,000 grant, will be utilized in all five elementary schools in the Quabbin District.

(EQLT), and Harold Webb met with selectmen regarding the conservation restriction of the Webb property. The property is a 12-acre piece of land on Route 32A. The conservation restriction will be held by EQLT. Webb said the property includes 900 feet of frontage, including frontage on both sides of Muddy Brook. He said the land is primarily wooded, and part of the restriction is that the land will be managed actively for forestry. “The reason we are donating this conservation restriction, is that we feel it is important to preserve the frontage along Muddy Brook. I don’t know how many feet of Muddy Brook will be protected, but it will be a continuum of the protection up the road at the old Jakshits property,” Webb said. Selectmen voted to grant the restrictions.

25 years ago (Dec. 21, 1995)

Honors chemistry students Dan Medford and Harley Bassett of Quabbin Regional High School use Cheerios to construct a model to represent the magnitude of the chemist’s counting unit, the mole. They calculated it would take an area of 39 earths to hold the 1.35x10(20) boxes of Cheerios needed to hold one mole of the crunchy units.

Members of Barre’s Christmas decorating committee were honored by the Barre Business Association with a dinner and a plaque for their community service. The committee includes Carol Sullivan, Gail Raney, Amy Crawford and Sandy Demetropolous. Dominic and Cindy Copolino, owners of the Barre Mill Restaurant, were also honored for improving their business.

A little canine comedienne brings smiles and laughter to passengers of the Ware River excursion trains as they pass through this small community. Puffy, a 9-year-old white poodle, who lives in a house which abuts the Ware River Line tracks, belongs to Jennifer Clark of Barre, but enjoys living with her adoptive “parents,” Warren and Emma Clark. A little clown, Puffy walks on her front paws, loves to play ball, and takes a stuffed rabbit to bed. She especially seems to enjoy waving to Ware River Line passengers from the vantage point of Emma’s arms as the train goes by. Emma had dressed Puffy in her Santa outfit for the rail line’s Christmas excursion train that made two runs from Palmer to Barre on Dec. 10. She and Warren were shocked when, on the second run back from Barre, the train made an unscheduled stop – right in front of their house! It seems the conductor has been telling passengers to watch for the little dog as they approach the Clark’s house, and her presence has brought such pleasure to the riders that a lady from the railroad presented the Clarks with a basket of fruit. A note attached said: “Thank you for your ‘waving dog.’ Our passengers have enjoyed seeing him!”

It was signed “The Ware River Line.” Puffy forgave them their social error in calling her a “he.” What kind of pooch could hold a grudge – especially after sniffing out the box of doggie treats enclosed in the fruit basket.

38 years ago (Dec. 23, 1982)

Teddie Doane, Stella Crawford, Susan Flagg and Police Chief James Wagner were recently appointed to the Hubbardston town office study committee. They will present selectmen with a proposal of options that could be taken to improve town office space.

Guest Column

Will my U.K. pension affect my Social Security?

By Russell Gloor
Guest columnist

Dear Rusty: I lived and worked in the United Kingdom prior to coming to the U.S. at age 45, which qualified me for a U.K. State Pension worth the equivalent of about \$740 U.S. dollars per month. Since moving to the U.S. I have contributed to the U.S. Social Security system for 14 years and my estimated U.S. Social Security benefit is \$1,643 per month. I have heard about something called “WEP” and must be honest and say I don’t fully understand. Can you provide some advice or references so I can understand what happens to these sums when I retire? I don’t have any other pension income, so understanding these numbers is important. FYI, I hold both U.S. and U.K. passports and will retire in the U.S.A.

Signed: Blessed from the UK

Dear Blessed: The “WEP” provision you refer to is known as the “Windfall Elimination Provision.” It affects anyone who is eligible to collect Social Security benefits, but who also has a pension from another entity (corporation, public agency, or foreign country), which did not participate in the U.S. Social Security program (meaning that SS FICA payroll taxes weren’t paid during that employment). WEP will reduce your U.S. Social Security benefit by using a special formula to compute your benefit amount. Generally, the WEP reduction is determined either by the number of years of substantial Social Security covered earnings that you have, or the WEP maximums (one of which is that your U.S. Social Security can’t be reduced by more than half of your non-covered pension. With less than 20 years paying into the U.S. system, you will incur one of the maximum WEP reductions.

Something else important to understand is that the current estimate you have from Social Security doesn’t include the WEP reduction. That estimate assumes that you will continue to earn at your current level until you reach your full retirement age. You haven’t shared your birthdate, but from your email I assume you are now about 60-years-old.

If you were born in 1959, your full retirement age (FRA) for U.S. Social Security purposes is 66 years and 10 months (if you were born after that your FRA is 67, and if you were born before that subtract 2 months for each year prior to 1959). Your FRA is when you will get your “full” Social Security benefit. If you claim before that (age 62 is the earliest you can claim) your benefit will be reduced (even before WEP), and if you wait beyond your FRA you’ll earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs), which will increase your benefit amount. DRCs stop at age 70.

Based upon what you’ve told me, I believe that your WEP reduction will probably be limited to one of the maximums, either half of your monthly U.K. pension, or the maximum for your “eligibility year” (2022?). We don’t yet know what the standard maximum WEP reduction for 2022 will be, but for 2020 it is \$480. That is the most that your Social Security benefit could normally be reduced. But if your U.K. pension is about \$740 U.S. Dollars, then your maximum reduction should be about \$370, because the WEP reduction can’t be more than half of your non-covered (U.K.) pension. So, your U.S. Social Security benefit of \$1,643 will most likely be reduced by about \$370 to about \$1,303. You will need to contact the U.K. pension system to see if any of your U.K. pension will be offset by your U.S. Social Security benefits.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the

See SOCIAL SECURITY, page 5

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BARRE GAZETTE

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See PAST PAGES, page 5

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Serenity Hill Sampler

by Jane McCauley

When I said once Thanksgiving is here Christmas comes very fast. It is hard to believe we will be celebrating Christmas next week. I haven't decided what to do for the day. With the virus, we don't have company or go anywhere except for groceries.

The Hubbardston Town Common has been decorated like they did last year. The Nativity is at the intersection of Rt. 68 and Williamsville Road. The First Parish Unitarian Church held their Gingerbread fair virtually.

As promised I am doing another cookie recipe. This is one that you can make and use your favorite Christmas cookie cutters.

SOUR CREAM SUGAR COOKIES
1 cup brown sugar
2 eggs
2/3 cup sour cream
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup shortening
Mix well with beaters and add
3 1/2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
Mix well and use the mixer. Refrigerate for about 3 hours. Roll out and use your cookie cutters. Bake 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes.

FROSTING
1/3 cup soft butter
3 cups powdered conf. sugar
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 Tbsp. milk

Mix well. Half of the mixture you can add food coloring if you wish. Spread well on cookies.

Another fun cookie is the peanut butter blossoms made with the Hershey kisses.

This week I did make a candy that you cook on top of the stove that contained oatmeal, cocoa, butter, raisins and nuts.

This and That
I have been sewing in the sewing room. I made three snowman bags from wool and a group of napkins. I also took some pieces of a quilt I had started and made an adult Christmas stocking.

Hope you all have a wonderful holiday season no matter how you decide to celebrate. Stay well.

Poinsettias appreciate extra TLC

Every Christmas the poinsettia takes the stage, front and center, in grocery and box store displays. The deep red bracts lure buyers to make them part of their holiday decorating. Pretty? For sure, but without proper care, the plant won't have a chance past New Year's Day. Let's learn what we can do to keep this favorite looking its best throughout the holiday season and then some.

It's important that you start off with a healthy plant. Choose a poinsettia with dark green foliage all the way to the soil line. Color should completely cover the bracts on the upper portion of the plant. Avoid plants whose flowers (located in the center of the bracts) show pollen. If pollen is evident, the plant is old. Be wary of those that are displayed in plastic or paper sleeves or even those that are elbow to elbow. Poinsettias need room to spread out, and the longer they are cramped, the more likely it is that their quality will be impacted. Wilted plants are also best avoided, as this may indicate more than dry soil alone.

Poinsettias are cold sensitive. Temperatures under 50 degrees for even a few minutes can damage the plant. Therefore, insert into a bag or protective sleeve for the ride home from the store and do not leave in an unheated car while you run other errands! Once home, position the poinsettia in a location where it will receive indirect light for at least six hours a day. Avoid drafts, warm or cold, and place far enough away from windows to prevent the foliage from touching cold glass. Chances

are if you are comfortable inside, your poinsettia will be as well. Temperatures from 65 to 70 degrees during the day to around 55 at night will extend its life.

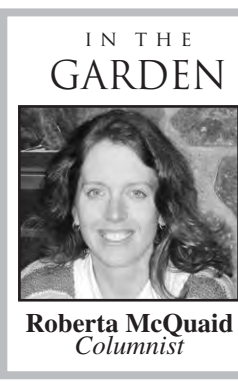
Check the plant often to see if it needs water. If the soil is dry, water until droplets leak through the drainage holes in the pot. Saucers shouldn't accumulate water. Dump the excess out after each watering so the plant won't reabsorb it and become waterlogged. Soil that remains soaking wet is likely to cause root rot. A visual indication of this irreversible disease is curled, wilting foliage and bracts. Hold off on fertilizing the plant while it is in bloom.

It's unfortunate that few people keep their poinsettias past the holiday season. When I was a kid my Mom succeeded at getting hers to bloom again the following Christmas. Here's what to do if you'd like to try it: In early April cut back the plant to eight inches. Fertilize with an all purpose houseplant fertilizer once a month. New growth should appear by the end of May. After the danger of frost has passed, move the plant outdoors. Continue to water but increase fertilization to every two weeks. Pinch plants in late June or early July to promote bushy growth. At this time you may also wish to repot the poinsettia. Select a pot one size large-

er, filling around the root ball with a good potting soil. Bring the plant indoors as temperatures fall.

The poinsettia is photoperiodic, and long nights of uninterrupted darkness encourage it to bloom. In greenhouses, growers go to great lengths to withhold light, as even small amounts can delay or stop the plant from setting bud. At home, putting the plant in the closet for 14 hours each night is your best bet. Most people get on a 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. schedule beginning on Oct. 1, and continue it for eight to 10 weeks until color shows on the bracts. Night temperatures should be no higher than 70 degrees or flowering may be delayed.

While my Mom achieved colorful bracts, the plant itself was a bit leggy and the foliage not so green. Perhaps more fertilizer and a harder pinch would have made our experiment more successful. Give it a try yourself and maybe you will have even better results!



Roberta McQuaid
Columnist

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

Free COVID-19 testing at HCC extended until March 31

HOLYOKE – Free "Stop the Spread" COVID-19 testing at Holyoke Community College has been extended until March 31, 2021, according to the Holyoke Board of Health.

Drive-through testing at HCC is conducted six days a week in parking lot H near the western entrance to the Donahue Building on the college's main campus, 303 Homestead Avenue.

HCC has been serving as a "Stop the Spread" drive-through testing site since Aug. 26 to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Drivers are asked to enter the campus from Homestead Avenue, turn left onto the Campus Road and proceed to parking lot H. There will be signs and parking attendants on site to manage the flow of traffic.

The HCC testing site is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 2-7 p.m.

Testing is free to all Massachusetts residents and conducted on a first come, first serve basis. There are no appoint-

ments and no referral is necessary. Turnaround time for results is typically four days or fewer.

More information on all of the Stop the Spread test sites across the state can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread>.

Testing may sometimes be cancelled due to inclement weather. Be sure to visit the Holyoke Board of Health website for up-to-date information on cancellations at <https://www.holyoke.org/departments/board-of-health>.

QRSD, continued from page 1

felt safe while in school. He also said compared to last spring, the remote materials were more difficult. He said in the spring he got his work done in two hours. This year the work took longer and was more challenging. He said he was getting his work done.

Superintendent report
School superintendent Sheila Muir commended Cheryl Duval and her team for the audit. She said the district received donations of cloth masks for the elementary schools made by a group of women. The district also received

a donation of 1,000 adult size fabric masks from AIS through United Way and received one mask per student from the Department of Education.

She said the October school enrollment total number was 2,130 down from 2,183. Individual numbers for the 2020-2021 school year were 69 pre-kindergarten, 136 kindergarten, 168 first grade, 137 second grade, 169 third grade, 135 fourth grade, 140 fifth grade, 168 sixth grade, 184 seventh grade, 172 eighth grade, 178 ninth grade, 139 tenth grade, 166 11th grade, 156 12th grade and 13 special education. Muir said some grade levels increased and others decreased. She said there was a reduction in

kindergarten numbers from the previous year of 172. She said it was a statewide trend as some families decided not to send children to kindergarten this year due to COVID. Overall, the district had 53 less students in the district. The numbers included remote, in person and hybrid learners.

Parent survey
The superintendent gave an update on the parent survey, which was still open. She said survey respondents to date reported 343 students in person, 143 remote and 354 hybrid. The top two reasons parents opted for remote learning was their child's health and followed by health of a family member.

SOCIAL SECURITY, continued from page 4

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Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

PAST PAGES, continued from page 4

John D. Neylon of Mechanic Street retired last week from the Charles G. Allen Company after 54 years of service. Neylon started in clerical and time keeping and in his own words, "has done just about everything since." He was an administrative assistant for the company for 35 years and retired as a purchasing agent. He held that position for twelve years. Neylon also drove a school bus for the town of Barre "before coming to work and after work." Last year he retired

from bus driving after serving the town for 51 years. "I drove three generations of children to school," Neylon said.

Nine Barre girls received Babysitting Certificate Awards for completing a 4-H extension course teaching the girls about being a good babysitter. Presenting awards was Barbara Wells, Barre 4-H chairman. Receiving awards were Jennifer Amidio, Barbara Bade, Diane Bade, Corice Boyer, Kristine DiRuzza, Chris Erikson, Becky Flagg, Julie Mennard and Michele White.



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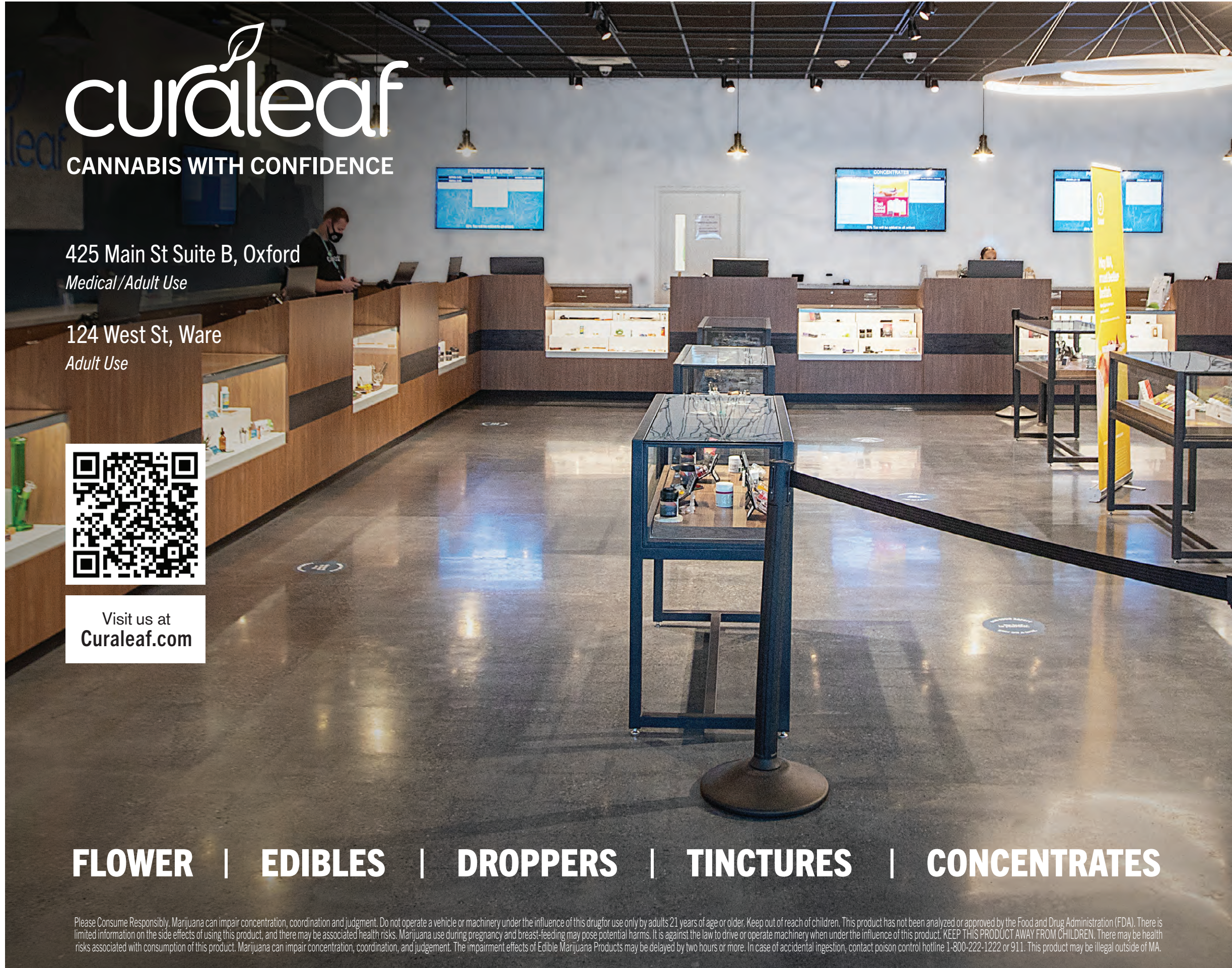
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Where is this?



Turley Publications Photo by Ellenor Downer

This week's mystery photo is from Barre. If any readers know where this photo was taken, they may email edowner@turley.com or call the Barre Gazette at 413-967-3505, extension 100 with their answer by noon on Monday, Dec. 21. The names of those that correctly guessed the location will appear in next week's edition. Gary Brigham, Paul Carlson, Dick Clark, Stephen Craven, Peggy Civilik, Judy Ruskowski, Carolyn Semon, Bruce Towner and Jeremy Varnum correctly identified the photo. Last week's photo was the picnic area at the corner of Rte. 122 and 122A in Rutland.

HARDWICK continued from page 1

business would not create a lot of traffic, or need for police detail, the town would be hard pressed to impose the maximum impact fee. Quink said there would be some impact, but maybe not to the tune of 3% of his sales..

Rogers said that he needs the community host agreement first, then the Planning Board's special permit, before he can secure the CCC licensing. He asked the Board of Selectmen if he would be able to start the public hearing process and asked to be on the agenda for their next meeting on Monday, Dec. 28.

Tax classification

Selectmen approved the town's fiscal 2021 tax rate and set a single tax classification for fiscal 2021. As Hardwick is largely a residential community that only has 9% commercial property, a two-tier rate would not provide much in terms of financial benefit. The single tax rate for fiscal 2021 will be \$15.58, less than the rate for fiscal 2020, which was \$15.98.

EMS update

Young asked Quink if there were any updates on EMS provided by West Brookfield. Quink said the West Brookfield Rescue Squad completed the runs and felt they could provide services in the appropriate response time. She said they now need to get Barre and West Brookfield together to work out the logistics. Quink will invite both parties to the next Board of

Selectmen's meeting on Monday, Dec. 28.

Contract dissolved

Young read a letter from the Board of Assessors seeking to dissolve the contract with SHI/Tyler Technologies IAS World immediately. The Board of Selectmen approved the motion to send the letter to SHI/Tyler Technologies IAS World.

License renewals

The Board of Selectmen approved the following motor vehicles license renewals: William Davis d/b/a Hardwick Auto Sales, Class II and Class III, located at 2583 Greenwich Road and Gary Gagne, Class II, located at 31 Spring Street.

The Board also approved the following license renewals for Eagle Hill Foundation of Massachusetts, Inc., 242 Old Petersham Road: Annual Liquor License, General On-Premises, All Alcoholic Beverages; Annual Victuallar License; and Inn Holder's License.

Correspondence

Cofske said the Planning Board received an email from Pamela Robinson in regard to land that is in Chapter 61A. Cofske said Robinson will also be reaching selectmen..

The next meeting of the Hardwick Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 28, via Microsoft Teams. The meeting agenda and information about how to join the meeting, can be found on the town website, townofhardwick.com, under calendar.

HUBBARDSTON continued from page 3

Senior center activities

The Hubbardston Senior Center continues to slowly open. The senior center has space limitations, only 10 people allowed in the building at a time. Monday and Wednesday mornings Coffee With Friends is from 9 to 11 a.m. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9 to 11

a.m. is the Walking Club. Due to space limitations, please call to register for any of the activities below: Bingo: Monday 12-3 p.m. call Flo 978-928-5113 to register. Meals on Wheels: Call the Senior Center 978-928-1400 extension 211. Food delivery on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Thursday is drive thru for food and eggs is 9:30 a.m. to noon. This schedule is subject to change due to Covid restrictions.

BARRE continued from page 1

meeting rather than remotely.

Other business

Selectmen approved a wage authorization step for Carol Witt. They also received a letter from North Brookfield Local Public Access about interest in having regional services with other towns. They also will see if the Rich Dignon needed an assistant to record meetings.

TAX RATE continued from page 1

mailed out by Dec. 3 with the third quarter payment due by Feb. 2, 2021 and the fourth quarter due by May 4, 2021.

If people have any questions regarding their valuation, they can contact the Assessor's Office at 978-355-2504, extension 103 or 104.

Abatement applications must be filed with this office no later than Feb. 2, 2021 and Exemption applications must be filed with this office no later than April 1, 2021.

ROUND TOWN continued from page 2

not be active until their appointment time. Items will be checked out to patrons when they are picked up. Checkout receipts will be emailed automatically, although they may request a printed copy. Patrons must make an appointment through the catalog, by phone or by email in order to pick up material. The library cannot serve people without an appointment. For step-by-step instructions on how to use this new feature or for detailed instructions on the library's outdoor service procedures, people may contact the library by phone at 978-355-2533, email at barrelibrary@gmail.com or visit our website, www.barrelibrary.org.

Food pantry

Barre Food Pantry distribution will occur Thursday, Dec. 17 from 5:30-7 p.m. The Barre Food Pantry schedules their two distributions each month on the morning of the second Wednesday and the evening of the third Thursday. As they have since the late March distribution, in order to maintain safe physical distances between volunteers and between volunteers and clients, Dec. 17 will again be "drive-through" style distributions. Clients will line up in their vehicles on Park Street and proceed into the right hand (east) entrance driveway of the Barre Congregational Church.They will remain in their cars. They'll drive up and be checked in by a volunteer, then continue up to the church building where their groceries will be put into the trunk or way-back of their vehicle by volunteers

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Final fall action



The Quabbin Regional High School boys soccer team has one of its final games of the regular season against Narragansett High School last month. The boys were one of five teams that had the opportunity to play fall sports. Quabbin's pod ran into some issues with a pair of schools having to bow out prior to the season's end on Nov. 20. But Quabbin was able to complete its remaining schedule.



Kolodziey steps down as Pioneers GM

Mutiny GM Ferrara takes helm

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW — Along with being the longtime boys' varsity soccer coach at Ludlow High School, Greg Kolodziey has also been the General Manager of the Western Mass. Pioneers for more than ten years.

Kolodziey recently stepped down as the Pioneers G.M. due to personal reasons.

"I'm excited about some new challenges that lie ahead," Kolodziey said. "I hope to spend more time on the soccer field doing what I enjoy most, coaching kids, and assisting and encouraging them to be good students so once they get through the graduation line, they are ready to do good, positive things in life."

Kolodziey is still planning to continue coaching the boys' varsity soccer team at his alma mater in the fall of 2021. He also coaches a Western



The New England Mutiny and Western Mass. Pioneers share a home stadium now. Mutiny owner Joe Ferrara was named the Pioneers GM.

United Pioneers squad.

Joe Ferrara, who like Kolodziey is a lifelong resident of Ludlow, has been named as the new General Manager of the Western Mass. Pioneers. He's also the owner of the New England Mutiny and is the Commissioner of the United Women's Soccer League.

"The Pioneers have a great support staff and the Mutiny also have a great support staff, so I think I'll be able to run both organizations without very much difficulty," Ferrara said. "The biggest challenge right now is that we still don't know what's going to be happening next spring."

The Pioneers and the Mutiny, who both play their home matches at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, didn't play any matches in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're hoping to have a season next year, but we're planning for several different scenarios," Ferrara said. "A normal regular season, a shortened season, a season without

fans, or no season at all."

Before Kolodziey stepped down from his position, he and Ferrara shared the same office at Lusitano Stadium.

"I do have a lot of respect for Greg and his family," Ferrara said. "I would like to meet with him about the Pioneers."

The Pioneers, who had a very successful 2019 campaign, are coached by Federico Molinari.

"Federico is a very good soccer coach," Ferrara said. "I'm looking forward to working with him on a daily basis."

The Pioneers assistant coaches are Dennis Gomes, Jay Willis, and John Voight.

The Pioneers are members of the USL 2 League and compete in the Northeast Division of the Eastern Conference.

The USL 2 League G.M. meetings are normally held in Florida in December, but they're going to be

See KOLODZIEY, page 8

No locker rooms, scrums in hockey modifications

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION — The parking lots at Olympia Ice Center and Fitzpatrick Rink could be very crowded this winter with students being forced to change outdoors as part of the modifications made to ice hockey for the 2020-2021 season.

High school guidelines from the office of Energy and Environmental Affairs required locker rooms to be closed at ice hockey arenas.

The only reason the locker rooms can be used is for players to use the bathroom and sinks. "Participants must wear-in/wear-out clothes or dress in the parking lot or other designated area," the guidelines state.

The change is to limit close contact among teammates due to locker rooms being very congested spaces with a lot of pads and equipment taking up even more space.

One change for hockey versus other sports is the ability for players to wear gaiters on the ice. Typically, face coverings for players and fans alike in most sports requires a mask that has loops that go over the ear, securely covering the mouth and nose. Hockey players are allowed to wear gaiters, which were viewed as less secure by some. Gaiter will be allowed for hockey players provided they are multi-ply.

One of the tougher parts to comply with is the fact only 20 players will be allowed to dress for the game, and some extended bench areas will be needed for both teams in order to social distance enough. Typically, 22 players are allowed on the roster for varsity games. Only three coaches will be allowed on benches for games, though that is close to average for most hockey teams.

Having more than one player in the penalty box will also be a new challenge as only one player is allowed in the penalty box at a time. According to the guidelines, other spaces must be designated for players to serve penalties.

"One person in the penalty box at a time," the guidelines state. "If another player must be in a designated 'auxiliary box/location,' they must be social distanced either outside the penalty box or in the bench area as close to the penalty box as possible; when possible the second and or subsequent penalized players must move to the penalty box upon the exit of the previously penalized player."

There is in option for subsequent players to serve penalties on their bench if necessary.

The biggest change fans will notice with play on the ice is the elimination of "scrums." These are plays typically when multiple players go after a loose puck in a

See HOCKEY, page 8

Seekonk Speedway announces events for next racing season

SEEKONK — Seekonk Speedway is looking ahead to a fresh, exciting 2021 season. On Dec. 3, the Massachusetts third-mile announced the full schedule of events for 2021 -- one that will mark the 75th anniversary of full-time racing. Seekonk Speedway looks forward to welcoming fans back to the grandstands safely, as the recent vaccine announcements for COVID-19 are welcomed news and talks continue with the state of Massachusetts.

Multiple major events headline the 2021 schedule -- including the ISMA Supermodified and Boston Louie NEMA Midget and NEMA Lite Races (June 9), the annual \$10,000 to win Open Wheel Wednesday headlined by the Tri Track Open Modified Series (June 30), the inaugural \$10,000 to win Bay State Summer Classic with the PASS Pro Stocks (July 28), the annual DAV Fall Classic (Sept. 24 to 25) and the Haunted Hundred, headlined by Tri Track (Oct. 23).

The slate includes 18 Saturday Night Showdowns -- showcasing Seekonk's premiere Pro Stocks, Everett's Auto Parts Late Models, Helger's South Coast Power Equipment Sportsman and Chaz Auto Body Sport Trucks. It will also see the return of the Fast Friday Series -- with 16 events for the Nick's Pit Stop Legends Cars, Helger's Pure Stocks, Sport 4's and Seekonk Grand Prix Bandoleros. Seekonk is pleased to welcome back all divisions and their sponsors, while adding Chaz Auto Body to the team of division spon-



File photos

Woody Pitkat was a big winner at the Sunoco World Series event.

sors.

With COVID-19 shutting down Saturday night competition and Thrill Shows in 2020, and only Fast Friday drivers hitting the track due to regulations from the state of Massachusetts to stop the spread of the virus, it's only fitting that the 75th anniversary be celebrated in 2021. Seekonk's Fast Friday classes ran a 10-race slate in front of no spectators in 2020, however, they continued to showcase youth talent and some of the best racing Seekonk offers through the track's YouTube channel.

"Our schedule includes a bit of something for everyone

who is a race fan in the region." Ed St. Germain, Director of Business Development at Seekonk Speedway, said. "We're excited for all of our special events, but above all, we can't wait to welcome back our great fans and get our premiere Saturday night divisions back on the track in 2021."

The season opens with two Test and tune sessions on April 10 and 24, while opening weekend returns on Saturday and Sunday, May 1-2. Saturday will include the Classic Car Show and Swap Meet fans have come to love, with burn

See RACING, page 8

Figure skating event cancelled due to COVID-19

WILLIAMSTOWN — This decision was based on the Bay State Games overriding concern to protect the health and safety of all participants, coaches, judges, volunteers, and spectators. Other factors that lead to this decision include state guidelines limiting public events, the uncertainty of whether the Williams College Lansing Chapman Rink will open in 2021, current limitations on use of Williams College facilities by outside groups and protocol requirements from national figure skating governing bodies.

"It is with great disappointment that we announce we will be unable to host the Bay State

Games figure skating competition in Williamstown in 2021," said Bay State Games Executive Director Kevin Cummings. "For the last 35 years, it has been a privilege to bring skaters and their families to Berkshire County for this longtime winter tradition. While our participants have always enjoyed travelling to the region for the event which has had a positive economic impact for local hotels and restaurants, many factors related to the pandemic prevent us from returning in the Winter of 2021."

Bay State Games will continue to evaluate the possibility of hosting a live skating event in Massachusetts

later in 2021 or as part of the Summer Games should the impact of the pandemic and restrictions improve. Potentially hosting virtual skating events later in the year is also under consideration. Future event options for 2021 are being investigated as federal, state, and local board of health protocols continue to be monitored. Bay State Games remains hopeful it can return to Berkshire County for 2022 events and beyond.

Updated information regarding the status of Bay State Games figure skating events will be posted on the Bay State Games website as soon as it is confirmed.

Senior photos from fall season wanted

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The fall season is nearing its end and Turley Publications has been all over the action.

But with this unpredictable season there have been temporary or in some cases, permanent stoppages in play, and we still want to help feature your athletes, espe-

cially those who are seniors this year.

We continue to ask for help on this season in order to bring the best coverage we can possibly manage and fill our pages with names and color.

We know that fans will be limited to the home crowds, but that is where you all come in.

If you attended any senior

games and would like to see those photos in our papers, we welcome submitted photos from those events and information about graduating seniors who participated in Fall 1 sports.

We also welcome any additional information about other major achievements. Send any and all information and photos for inclusion to sports@turley.com.

Church News

Christmas Pageant blessings

By Carole Gariepy

PHILLIPSTON – Sunday, Dec. 13, cold and foggy, but above freezing so the Congregational Church of Phillipston held its worship service outside where everyone feels comfortable about gathering during this time of Covid. Rev. Stephanie Flynn said, “We are becoming more like the original Christians, who were without churches and steeples. These are blessings. Jesus did not have those luxuries.” Thinking about Jesus preaching outside to his followers made us feel good about doing the same. In fact, fog is a low-lying cloud and that gave the service a kind of heavenly feeling.

Les Dossett has told the Children’s Story every week for many years. He told how our attitude is our steering wheel and how we can steer ourselves in any direction we choose, the choices are ours to make. He read “Anyway” a writing that holds good advice for people of all ages and in all situations -- no matter what adversities may come our way, Give the world the best you have anyway.

The Bible reading was the Christmas story from Luke followed by Rev. Flynn instructing everyone to select a pageant costume from the assorted boxes -- an innkeeper, donkey, ox, lamb, shepherd, star, angel, Joseph, Mary, Jesus. Soon everyone was adorned with a simple representation of the various roles and she told us the blessings of each, and how we can incorporate these blessings into our daily lives.



Turley Publications Submitted Photos

Rev. Stephanie Flynn speaks during an outdoor service at the Congregational Church of Phillipston.



Les Dossett delivers the Children's Story.

The Innkeeper: May the outreach of the innkeeper help us make a place in our homes for a family in need and make a place



Rosalie Tallman wears an angel costume.

in our lives for hope.

The Donkey: May we be humble like the donkey, who carried the mother of God, and be

willing to carry the burdens of the poor.

The Ox: May the manger that was the dining table of the ox bless us with the joy of offering hospitality to others.

The Lamb: May the lamb bless us to stay innocent and pure as the Child in the Manger who became the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The Shepherd: May we, like the shepherd, spread the good news about Jesus that brings peace and comfort to the world.

The Star: May the Star that led the Wise Men from afar shine so brightly in our hearts, that we may be led closer to Jesus and know him more fully.

The Angel: May we be voices of joy and hope, and bring words of assurance to people in need.

Joseph: May our hearts be filled with patience, loyalty and devotion, like the carpenter whose skilled caring brought safety and well-being to Mary and the Child Jesus.

Mary, Mother of Jesus: May we be blessed with the gifts of Mary, her acceptance of God’s will for her life, and her courage and steadfastness in adversity.

The Christ Child: May the blessings of the Christ Child, who shows us purity and purpose, innocence and grace, love and compassion, be with us now and through the coming year.

Rev. Flynn and her son Andrew played an excellent clarinet/saxophone duet arrangement of “We Need a Little Christmas.” The Christmas message is needed more this year than ever. The service was fun, festive and meaningful.

Local pastors offer sermons

A Season of Giving Pt. 2

My father-Lord rest his soul- was a difficult man to buy gifts for. He would jokingly say, “What can you give the man that already has it all?” Thus, he tended to end up with a lot of Old Spice cologne on Christmas morning! Over the years, however, I came to understand what my father truly wanted from his children:

1) Quality Time

My dad reveled in quality time spent with his kids. He cherished moments of undisturbed, undivided attention wherein we could be together. Whether it was one-on-one or in group settings, during the holidays or throughout the year, all the man really wanted was intimate connection with his family.

2) Affection

I can still remember the look on my father’s face upon hearing the words “I love you” or “thank you, dad.” To him, these tokens of my affection meant more than any physical gift item I could have sacrificially offered.

3) Honor

My father delighted in the reverence of his children. He was a man who worked to model character, integrity and morality and it blessed him when we recognized him in kind. Whether our regard was evidenced by listening to the wisdom he had to offer, heeding his sage advice, or choosing to mimic the example he set forth, he exulted in the honor that he was due-and it was our privilege to offer it.

Spiritually speaking, I posit that God our Father is much the same in many regards. There is nothing that we can purchase and/or present to Him that He genuinely needs. Last I checked, the Lord has not distributed a divine wish-list of holiday items with accompanying links to Amazon Prime. Yet, I do believe that He longs for what all good fathers desire:

1) Quality Time

The Lord delights in quality time spent with His children. I believe that He cherishes moments of undisturbed, undivided attention wherein we can be together. Whether it is one-on-one or in group settings, during the Christmas season or throughout the year, He wants intimate communion with His own. Is it our joy to spend such

time with Him?

When was the last time you spent some time with the Lord?

When was the last time you shared intimate connection with Him?

When was the last time you sought Him in prayer, worship, and so forth?

Let us follow the example of Christ, who habitually made time to spend time with the Lord. Scripture reveals that Jesus often removed Himself from the hustle and bustle of living to commune with His beloved Father. As Luke 5:16 notes, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

2) Affection

I often imagine the look on my heavenly Father’s face upon hearing the words “I love You” or “thank You, Lord.” To Him, these tokens of affection mean more than any physical item I could sacrificially offer. I have learned over my decades as a believer that a spirit of tender affection and gratitude does much to move His heart. Is it our pleasure to offer such things to the One who is most worthy?

When was the last time you said, “I love You, God”?

When was the last time you said, “Thank You, Lord”?

Let us be spiritual sons and daughters that heed and embrace passages like the following:

1 Chronicles 16:8, 34

8 Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

34 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Psalm 145:1-2, 21

1 I will exalt you, my God the King;

I will praise your name for ever and ever.

2 Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

21 My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.

Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

3) Honor

Our Father delights in the reverence of His children. He is matchless in His character and holiness (cf. Isaiah 6), and it blesses Him when we recognize Him in kind. Whether our regard is evidenced by listening to the wisdom of His Word, obeying His commandments and following His directives, or choosing to mimic the example He set forth in Christ Jesus, He exults in the honor He is due. Is it our privilege to show such honor?

Is your heart attuned to the

Word of God?

Do you seek to heed His precepts and embrace His ways?

Are you following the example of Jesus Christ and living as He did?

Consider this oracle of the Lord, shared through Isaiah the prophet many centuries ago:

Isaiah 66:2

“These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.”

Is it your intent to give God what He really wants this Christmas? Then receive the points outlined above as His “Wish-List” and get to work in this season of giving! Thank you for taking the time to read this publication. Feel free to check us out online at www.NewLifeBarre.org or visit us in person each Sunday at 10:30am (COVID-19 protocols are presented on the aforementioned website). We hope to see you soon!

Pastor James Foley

New Life Assembly of God
South Barre

Third Sunday of Advent

“Our God of Good News and Righteousness”

(Our services can be watched on the church website at www.barrechurch.com and Facebook page)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61 v 1-4 and 8-11

I. Introduction:

Isn’t it wonderful to receive good news, especially if it comes unexpected? Hearing about the birth of a baby is such beautiful news, especially if it is happening in our own families or loved ones close to us. Hearing about a new job, especially if one had been unemployed for a while, is extraordinary news. Having passed one’s exams is probably one of the more exciting pieces of news one can hear, and then there is the new puppy or pet that enters a home, and changes everything. There are many things that happen, which bring good news to us, and in today’s situation, any piece of good news is certainly welcomed right?

II. The God of Good News and Righteousness

This Chapter of Isaiah is part of a body of poetic writings that speak about the challenges of the people of Israel, their struggles, and their hopes in Yahweh’s interventions. The

chapter is divided into different sections starting in verses 1 – 7 with an identified human actor, who seems to be a person of authority, and who brings the good news about the restoration of Judah after their suffering in exile. In verses 8-9 God enters the picture by declaring God’s love for and commitment to justice and then in verses 10-11 the human representative continues in great joy about Yahweh clothing him with righteousness, as well as filling the community with righteousness and praise.

This individual has been blessed with the Spirit of Yahweh, who came over him, and anointed him to preach good news, which involved the healing of the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom to the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners, to comfort those who mourn, and more. This proclamation comes from a deep understanding of the suffering of the people of Judah and speaks about a powerful ministry to the marginalized and their restoration to their full capabilities. This passage also speaks about the year of the Lord, with reference to Leviticus 25, which deals with the economic restoration of those who lost their land and properties. This passage is God’s way of letting the people of Judah know that their emotional and physical and economic suffering will come to an end. God will see to it that their life of poverty and powerlessness and despair will be transformed by this good news of change that will be manifested in their lives, and in their communities.

We then see God entering the scene in verse 8 – 9, declaring God’s love for justice and hatred of robbery and iniquity. I hate to see my people suffer. I will change their circumstances from mourning to gladness, from ashes to beauty, from despair to praise. I want my people to be in a good place and I want them to be happy, says the Lord.

And...the nations who did this to them will witness these changes. Those who did this will see the double blessing that comes from me, says the Lord. My people will be restored and strengthened like oaks of righteousness, and then they will rebuild their ruined cities. I am the Lord, who loves justice and righteousness.

In the final verses the individual comes back and is completely elated by the salvation

Obituaries

Roxanne V. (Bacon) Majka McHugh, 76

WARREN/BARRE – Roxanne V. (Bacon) Majka McHugh, 76, passed away peacefully on Monday, Dec. 7, 2020 at home. She was born in Ware, the daughter of the late John Bacon and Stella O’Donnell. She is predeceased by her husband, John Majka in 1969, her husband, Bernard J. McHugh, Jr. in 2013, a daughter, Diana C. Majka in 1966, two brothers, Bucky Bacon and Maurice Patrick, as well as two sisters, Shiela Majka and Theresa Stancombe.

She leaves six children, Daniel F. Majka, Dwayne A. Majka and Glen P. McHugh, all of Barre, Bernard J. McHugh III of Southbridge, Donna L.

Dufort of South Hadley and Michelle L. Bigos of Warren; numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren and three sisters, Joy Keddy, Dorothy Gelinas, and Angela Cooley.

A graveside service for Roxanne was held on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020 at 11 a.m. in Glen Valley Cemetery in Barre. Arrangements are under the care of Pillsbury Funeral Home, 96 South Barre Road, Barre.

DEATH NOTICE

**Majka McHugh (Bacon),
Roxanne V.**
Died Dec. 7, 2020

Congregational church to hold outdoor candlelight service

BARRE – The Barre Congregational Church, 30 Park St., is continuing a 35 year tradition of celebrating Christmas Eve with a Family Christmas Eve service.

This year the service will be held on the front lawn of the church Thursday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. The service will include singing of Christmas carols, reading the Christmas story through scripture and candle lighting. The church members hope that many people of all ages from the community will join them to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Candles and programs will be provided. Masks are required.

Tri-Parish Community Church news

HARDWICK – The Sunday, Dec. 20 service of the Tri-Parish Community Church will be held at the Hardwick Universalist Church at 10 a.m. and led by Deacon Marguerite Crevier. Due to the absence of a full-time pastor, the Sunday church services are led by the deacons, Marguerite Crevier of Hardwick, Ginny Rich of Barre and Jennifer Pollard of New Braintree. If you have the opportunity to attend the Tri-Parish, you would be treated to the inspirational and uplifting messages

these Deacons bring each Sunday. Christmas Eve Service will be at the First Universalist Church of Hardwick at 5 p.m. – earlier than previous years because of COVID-19 and being outdoors in front of the church. Readings from Luke and Matthew, hymns; and, then the candle lighting with “Silent Night” with organist Deborah Kane. Masks and social distancing are required; and, if the weather does not cooperate, the speaker system will allow you to hear the service from your car.

Country Bank donates \$10,000 to Behavioral Health Network

WARE — Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, donated \$10,000 to Behavioral Health Network (BHN) to assist them with the Under 5 Thrive program and the Kid Stop Child Center based in Ware. BHN serves nearly 50,000 people annually in 40 locations throughout Western Massachusetts by assisting them with various needs, such as, mental health, children’s services and addiction and recovery.

Over the past eight years, Country Bank has donated a total of \$315,000 to support the indispensable work BHN offers to the region. “Thank you so much for this important contribution to our children’s services in Ware. This will go a long way towards helping local families with resources and assistance to keep their children safe and healthy in the coming year,” stated Susan West, senior vice president of BHN.

“The pandemic has certainly placed a strain on our local communities; child

care has been one area that has been hugely impacted and has left families trying to balance child care needs with work schedules. It has not been easy for anyone throughout the last several months and we are so grateful to have these places right here in our community to help support local families. The essential programs that BHN provides aligns perfectly with Country Bank’s mission to help improve the livelihood of those in our communities,” stated Shelley Regin, senior vice president, marketing of Country Bank and Advisory Board member at BHN.

To learn more about the various programs offered through Behavioral Health Network and Valley Human Services, people may visit <https://www.bhninc.org/>.

Country Bank is a full-service mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 14 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton and Worcester.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

Barre Gazette OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.



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Public Safety

Barre Police Log

Monday, Dec. 7

1:49 p.m. Larceny Loring Road – Report Filed

2:06 p.m. Fraud South Street – Report Filed

Wednesday, Dec. 8

3:37 p.m. 911 Transfer Worcester Road – Call Transferred

Friday, Dec. 11

4:28 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency Circle Road – Transported to Hospital

5:23 p.m. Motor Vehicle Accident Williamsville Road – Services Rendered

Saturday, Dec. 12

9:33 a.m. Fire, Medical Emergency North Brookfield Road – Ambulance Signed Refusal

4:30 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency Clem Court – Transported to Hospital

9:16 p.m. Gunshots Farrington Road – Negative Contact

Oakham Police Log

Sunday, Dec. 6

12:28 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Old Turnpike Road – Citation Issued

12:45 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Worcester Road – Citation Issued

Tuesday, Dec. 8

11:10 a.m. Fraud Bullard Road – Officer Spoke to Party

Wednesday, Dec. 9

5:59 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency East Hill Road – Public Assist

Thursday, Dec. 10

2:03 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Old Turnpike Road – Citation Issued

Friday, Dec. 11

3:52 p.m. Fire, Smoke Investigation Spencer Road – Investigated

5:49 p.m. Safety Concern North Brookfield Road – Services Rendered

7:25 p.m. Animal Emergency Call North Brookfield Road – Animal Returned to Owner

7:36 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency Spencer Road – Transported to Hospital

Saturday, Dec. 12

11:24 a.m. Trespassing Hunt Road – Gone on Arrival

8:45 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Worcester Road – Citation Issued

Hubbardston Police Log

Sunday, Dec. 6

7:35 a.m. Fire, Public Service Call Old Princeton Cutoff Road – Entry Gained

10:41 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Barre Road – Vehicle Towed

Summons: Samuel P. Styckiewicz, 28, Greenfield

License Suspended, Operate Motor Vehicle With

2:25 p.m. Illegal Dumping Pitcherville Road – Unfounded

Tuesday, Dec. 8

5:54 a.m. Fire, Smoke Investigation Healdville Road – Investigated

Wednesday, Dec. 9

1 p.m. Fire, Auto/Car Worcester Road – Area Patrolled

Friday, Dec. 11

8:48 a.m. Motor Vehicle Accident Hit and Run New Templeton Road – Report Filed

Saturday, Dec. 12

7:26 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Worcester Road – Citation Issued

New Braintree Police Log

For the week of Dec. 7-14, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department conducted 17 building/property checks, 4 radar assignments, 1 motor vehicle accident, 5 motor vehicle stops, 18 directed/area patrols, 6 traffic controls and 5 emergency 911 calls in the town of New Braintree.

Tuesday, Dec. 8

7:06 a.m. 911 – Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations West Brookfield Road – Investigated

9 p.m. 911 – Medical Emergency West Road – Services Rendered

Wednesday, Dec. 9

9:56 a.m. Phone – Fraud Old Common Road – Spoken To

Thursday, Dec. 10

2:49 p.m. 911 – Medical Emergency Letendre Lane – Transported to Hospital

Friday, Dec. 11

5:36 p.m. Initiated – Motor Vehicle Stop Barre Road – Citation Issued

Saturday, Dec. 12

12:44 a.m. 911 – Medical Emergency West Road – Services Rendered

1:31 a.m. 911 – Motor Vehicle Accident Mara Road – Transported to Hospital

BBB warns of health insurance scams

Every year during health insurance open enrollment season, scammers try to dupe unsuspecting consumers into sharing their personal information. This year is no exception. According to new BBB.org/ScamTracker reports, Americans are getting scam calls phishing for their Medicare numbers and other personal information. This year, open enrollment runs October 15 - December 7, 2020 for Medicare and November 1- December 15, 2020 for the Affordable Care Act.

How the Scam Works:

You receive a call (or a recorded message) from someone who claims to be helping you navigate your Medicare options. They may call themselves a “health care benefits advocate” or a similar title. The caller says they can enroll you in a better Medicare program than what you currently have. This new plan is cheaper, and you can keep all the same services. To get started, all you need to do is provide some personal information, such as your Medicare ID number. Of course, the call is a scam, and sharing personal information will open you up to identity theft.

In another version reported to BBB.org/ScamTracker, the caller is trying to frighten – rather than assist -you. In this case, they claim that your Medicare will be discontinued if you don’t re-enroll. Fortunately, this “Medicare advisor” can fix the situation – if only you share your share personal information.

Also, BBB.org/ScamTracker is getting reports about callers pushing “free” back or knee braces. This is Medicare fraud, and you can learn more about these scams here.

Tips to Avoid Open Enrollment Scams

Selecting a health insurance plan can be challenging and complex. Be on the lookout for common red flags.

Be wary of anyone who contacts you unsolicited. People representing Medicare or ACA plans don’t contact you by phone, email, or in person unless you are already enrolled. Be especially cautious of threatening calls that require quick action or immediate payment.

Decline promotional gifts in exchange for personal information. Keep a healthy level of skepticism any time a broker offers you free gifts, health screenings, or other special deals. Never sign up with a broker who offers you an expensive “sign-up gift” in exchange for providing your Medicare ID number or other personally identifiable information.

Beware of dishonest brokers who offer “free health screenings.”

Some brokers offer this to weed out people who are less healthy. This is called “cherry picking” and is against the Medicare rules.

Guard your government-issued numbers. Never offer your Medicare ID number, Social Security number, health plan info, or banking information to anyone you don’t know.

Hang up and go to official websites. You can enroll or re-enroll in Medicare at Medicare.gov or in a marketplace health plan at Healthcare.gov.

Learn more about open enrollment and spotting a Medicare or ACA scam on the Federal Trade Commission website.

If you are unsure whether a call or offer is from Medicare, or you gave your personal information to someone claiming to be with Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE to report it. If you suspect fraud when signing up for ACA coverage, go to Healthcare.gov or call the Health Insurance Marketplace call center at 800-318-2596.

For more tips from BBB on avoiding health care scams, check BBB.org/HealthCareScam. If you’ve been the victim of a charity scam, please report it to BBB.org/ScamTracker. By sharing your experience, you can help others avoid falling victim to similar scams.

Rutland Police Log

Sunday, Dec. 6

12:13 p.m. Fraud Main Street – Report Filed

3:36 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Maple Avenue – Written Warning

4:20 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Pommogussett Road – Citation Issued

5:20 p.m. Disturbance, Noise Complaint Memorial Drive – Report Filed

10:13 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Pommogussett Road – Vehicle Towed

Tuesday, Dec. 8

3:44 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency Charnock Hill Road – Transported to Hospital

Wednesday, Dec. 9

9:51 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Pleasantdale Road – Arrest(s) Made

Arrest: Adam M. Mortell, 26, Barre

License Suspended, Operate Motor Vehicle With; Drug, Possess Class E

1:09 p.m. Threats Pommogussett Road – Officer Spoke to Party

4:24 p.m. Motor Vehicle Accident Main Street – Officer Spoke to Party

5:59 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency East Hill Road – Public Assist

7:38 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency Lewis Street – Transported to Hospital

Thursday, Dec. 10

10:11 a.m. Fraud Newman Drive – Report Filed

3:21 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency Central Tree Road – Transported to Hospital

3:43 p.m. Safety Concern East County Road – Officer Spoke to Party

4:02 p.m. Trespassing Hillside Road – Party Departed Without Incident

4:09 p.m. Fire, Medical Emergency Prospect Street – Referred to Other Agency

4:50 p.m. Safety Concern Pommogussett Road – Gone on Arrival

9:57 p.m. Serve Warrant Main Street – Arrest(s) Made

Arrest: James D. Cobb, 22, Rutland

Warrant

Friday, Dec. 11

2:15 a.m. Parking Violation Nancy Drive – Written Warning

2:27 a.m. Parking Violation Prouty Lane – Written Warning

9:12 a.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Barre Paxton Road – Arrest(s) Made

Arrest: Kahill Jones, 38, Stockbridge

Drug, Possess Class E; Firearm, Possess Large Capacity; Ammunition

Saturday, Dec. 12

12:43 a.m. Motor Vehicle Accident Pommogussett Road – Party Departed Without Incident

12:13 p.m. Fraud Main Street – No Action Required

3:05 p.m. Fire, Electrical Emergency Prescott Street – Investigated

8:25 p.m. Motor Vehicle Stop Main Street – Citation Issued

Hardwick Police Log

For the week of Dec. 7-14, the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department conducted 60 building/property checks, 3 animal calls, 7 emergency 911 calls, 1 safety hazard, 6 radar assignments, 13 directed/area patrols, 5 traffic controls and 2 motor vehicle stops in the town of Hardwick.

Monday, Dec. 7

8:18 a.m. Phone – Safety Hazard Barre Road – Taken/Referred to Other Agency

12:58 p.m. Phone – Complaint Pine Street – No Action Required

9:10 p.m. Phone – Missing Person Barre – Negative Contact

Tuesday, Dec. 8

12:52 p.m. Phone – Forgery/Fraud North Road – Report Taken

Wednesday, Dec. 9

4:27 p.m. 911 – Fire, Other Bridge Street – Arrest(s) Made

Thursday, Dec. 10

1:49 p.m. Phone – Forgery/Fraud Sessions Road – Report Taken

Saturday, Dec. 12

9:45 a.m. Phone – Complaint Broad Street – Spoken To

1:48 p.m. 911 – Disturbance Bridge Street – Report Taken

10:55 p.m. 911 – Utility Issues Bridge Street – Taken/Referred to Other Agency

Sunday, Dec. 13

8:37 p.m. 911 – Complaint/Motor Vehicle Operations Bridge Street – Spoken To

9:17 p.m. 911 – Medical Emergency Collins Road – Services Rendered

BBB warns of new scams

Scammers are taking advantage of would-be Instagram influencers by tricking them into buying over-priced products that allegedly support a charity. Instead of gaining followers and helping a good cause, the influencers end up losing money.

How the Scam Works

You received a direct message in Instagram that appears to come from a charity or from a business claiming to have partnered with a charity. The representative wants to know if you would be interested in becoming a “model” or “brand ambassador” for their new campaign. This promotion is allegedly supporting a nonprofit – recent reports to BBB.org/ScamTracker mention everything from environmental conservation to women’s rights to LGBTQ youth.

The “representative” sends you a discount code to purchase the products they want you to model. The prices in the online store are high, but, according to the representative, the sales go to support the charity.

Unfortunately, there’s a catch. Victims report purchasing items – often t-shirts – that never arrive. In some cases, the charity never even existed. In others, the charity is real, but scammers used their name without their knowledge, and the nonprofit never received money from the sales.

How to spot an influencer scam:

Ask questions: Targets of this con told BBB.org/ScamTracker that when they asked for details about the charity and how the donations are used, the scammer got evasive and stopped responding. Don’t hesitate to push back if something seems off.

If an offer looks suspicious, do a search. If something is a scam, victims are likely to have posted about it online. Also, the charity’s website and/or social media should mention the partnership – if it’s real.

Know the signs of fake social media accounts: Make sure the business or charity contacting you is real. This article has detailed information about how to spot a phony Instagram account.

Report scam accounts and messages to Facebook and Instagram: Alert administrators to fake profiles, compromised accounts, and spam messages by reporting them on Facebook and Instagram.

Learn how to spot a job scam: This social media ambassador con uses many of the same techniques as a job scam. Read more about them at BBB.org/EmploymentScam.

SERMONS continued from page 9

he received from Yahweh, and the commitment of Yahweh to the people of Judah. Out of the ashes and despair comes their justification, and their complete healing and restoration.

III. God in Jesus Christ continues to bring the Good news and a message of righteousness.

While this text in Isaiah 61 verses 1-4 does not refer to Christ, the Messiah, but rather to the restoration of the devastation of the people of Judah, we see Him reading from the scroll of Isaiah at the temple in Nazareth the words, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor,” and so forth. Then He sat down and told those in the synagogue that the scripture is fulfilled in their hearing, meaning that through His coming this scripture has been fulfilled. That statement created so much anger among the people in the Synagogue, that they drove Him out of town. They did that because of His claim to be the One sent by God to heal the world. God through Jesus Christ is therefore still committed to the restoration of the poor and the marginalized in the time of Jesus, and today. That is who God is from the time of Leviticus, throughout the Old Testament, a God of justice, who sees the plight of the poor, the victimized, the ones on the margins.

IV. Conclusion

During this period of Advent, let us take the time to reflect on the incredible love God has for humanity, for us. God’s love is so immense, it challenges the forces of darkness then, and now. God still sees every injustice in this world and will not rest where there is unjust suffering. The celebration of the birth of Christ is a celebration of joy, as well as about the restoration of the pain and suffering of God’s people. We as God’s children can call out to this God of righteousness any time to bring an end to an injustice in our lives, and in this world. We can do that, knowing that God hears us, and wants to bring us peace and healing, and wants to bring us good news of change and transformation.

May God help each one of us to continue to believe that nothing is impossible with God in the face of the pain and suffering we experience and what we see around us.

Amen

Pastor Margaret Keyser
Barre Congregational Church

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for all PUBLIC NOTICES...

to run the week of
December 21-25, 2020:

- Thursday, Dec. 17 at NOON
The Register, Sentinel,
The Wilbraham-Hampden Times,
Agawam Advertiser News,
Quaboag Current
- Friday, Dec. 18 at Noon
Barre Gazette, Country Journal,
Ware River News
The Journal Register
- Monday, Dec. 21 at noon
Town Reminder,
Chicopee Register and
The Holyoke Sun

Happy Holidays!

to run the week of
December 28 -
January 1, 2021:

- Wednesday, Dec. 23 at noon
The Register, Sentinel,
The Wilbraham-Hampden Times,
Agawam Advertiser News,
Quaboag Current, Barre Gazette,
Country Journal, Ware River News
The Journal Register
- Monday, Dec. 28 at noon
Town Reminder, Chicopee Register
and The Holyoke Sun

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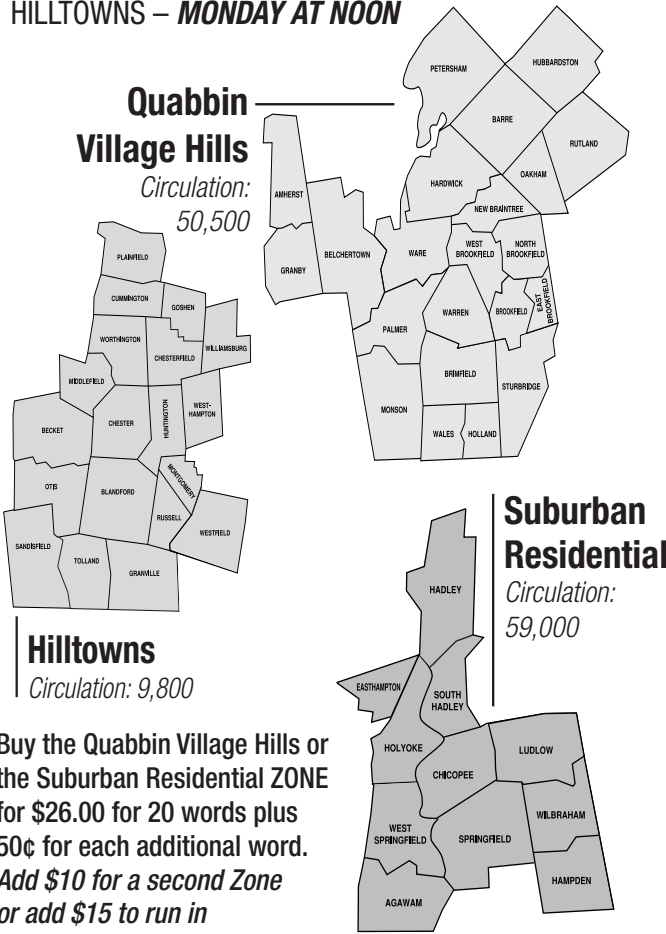
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25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
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Public Notices

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December 14, 2020

The owner(s), occupant(s) and public are hereby notified that the following described parcels herein, located within the municipality of the Town of New Braintree and Worcester County, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have taxes for the year 2017 as committed to the Collector of Taxes, by the Board of Assessors of this municipality which remain delinquent and unpaid, and that the property herein described will be taken by the Town of New Braintree on **Thursday, December 31, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.** for non-payment of taxes, including interest and all legal costs and charges thereon, unless the property shall be previously discharged.

Property Location: 105 RAVINE ROAD
Assessed Owners: HOLMES, RUTH H.
Subsequent Owner: HOLMES, STEVEN
Bill Number: 241
2017 REAL ESTATE TAXES: 1,825.61
Description: A parcel of land with any buildings thereon, containing about 5.100 acres described as parcel 401.0 0000 0007.0 in the office of the Assessors of the Town of New Braintree identified in book and page 15162 113, Worcester County Registry of Deeds.

Janet A. Pierce
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Town of New Braintree

12/17/2020

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Country Bank announces sponsorship with Worcester Red Sox

WORCESTER – Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving the region with assets of \$1.8 billion, announced that it entered into an elite-level corporate sponsorship arrangement as a Founding Partner of the Worcester Red Sox.

Country Bank’s multi-tiered sponsorship includes an iconic sign in right field atop the stands known as the “Worcester Wall” along with the Country Bank Guests Services located on the first base concourse.

The partnership between the WooSox and Country Bank also underscores their mutual commitment to the community through the WooSox Foundation and Country Bank’s Charitable Giving Program by supporting local non-profits in the region through a combined charitable giving campaign

throughout the baseball season.

In addition, both organizations will be working together to launch a Teacher of the Month Program that recognizes the outstanding work teachers do every day to educate and support students. “We have been impressed and inspired by Country Bank’s sense of community involvement,” said WooSox President Dr. Charles A. Steinberg. “We see how helpful they are to various institutions and thousands of people in our region, and we welcome them to Polar Park with open arms as we work together to enhance the quality of life in our community even more.” “In an era where spectator sports continue to be redefined by new norms of social distancing, sports sponsorships are taking on new forms. With that in mind, we couldn’t be more excited to be

a part of the WooSox and the Worcester community. The addition of year-round entertainment including ball games, concerts and various family activities at Polar Park, is exciting for the people and businesses in the region. We all look forward to the day when we can come together again at the ballpark enjoying activities with our families and friends. We also look forward to seeing our businesses thrive once again after being heavily impacted by the pandemic,” said Paul Scully, President and CEO of Country Bank. To kick off their partnership, last week a team from Country Bank and the WooSox Mascot, Smiley Ball, delivered 500 Thanksgiving meals prepared by Old Sturbridge Village along with iconic apple pies from Worcester based Table Talk Pies to the St. John’s Food Pantry for

the Poor. “The alignment of our organizational values with the WooSox solidifies our commitment to service and teamwork as we continually strive for excellence in all we do,” shared Scully.

Country Bank is a full-service mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 14 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, and Worcester.



Turley Publications Courtesy Photo
Shown in front of the Country Bank sign at the new Worcester ball park are, from left, Paul Scully, president and CEO of Country Bank and Dr. Charles Steinberg, WooSox president.

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